

ANNA ESHOO, a Democrat from California. I am a Republican.

We have other Republicans here who will speak in a time when Congress seems so divided on every issue—again, we have 200 of our colleagues—in a transpartisan initiative to say that this is unjust, this must be stopped.

By our actions of calling it a genocide, we not only elevate international consciousness, but again we create the conditions for the proper redress once we come to some proper settlement in the Middle East.

I am so grateful for the gentleman's time and efforts on this behalf and for his leadership in Congress. I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI.)

Let me turn to my good friend as well, Congressman JODY B. HICE, a new Member of Congress from Georgia, who has shown initiative, entrepreneurial endeavor, integrating quickly as an impact player, if you will, in the proceedings here in Congress. I am grateful for his willingness to speak on this topic, but, more than that, grateful for our growing friendship.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE).

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) for bringing attention to this incredibly important issue and the absolute carnage that is occurring in the Middle East against Christians, Yazidis, and people of other religious faiths and minorities.

You know, the right to practice a chosen religion is a right that I—and I believe all of us—believe should be universal. Yet, the religious persecution, especially by such violent means that is occurring now, is absolutely deplorable.

ISIS has shown its true nature in the treatment of these religious minorities. We have all witnessed in recent months the violent expansion of ISIS in the Middle East as they have single-mindedly persecuted those who adhere to different faiths.

In fact, those who refuse to convert have been driven from their homes, brutally tortured, crucified, raped, murdered, enslaved, and not by just few in number. We are talking thousands that fall under this horrific scenario.

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The systematic violence of ISIS toward communities of Yazidis, Christians, Kurds, Turkmen, whatever it may be, as you have well mentioned, goes far beyond war crimes. We are talking absolute genocide.

In looking at all this, it was interesting to me that, when the world came together after the atrocities of the Second World War in an effort to define genocide, they actually defined it as an actor committing certain acts against a designated group with an intent to destroy the group in whole or in part.

ISIS has. They absolutely have the intent to destroy, in whole, Christians, Yazidis, and all religious groups throughout the Middle East. In fact, their entire propaganda even brags about the abhorrent crimes that they are committing, and they show absolutely no signs of willingness to stop these atrocities.

It is clear to me that we have an obligation—not only a moral one, but a legal obligation—to prevent these atrocities from occurring. In fact, 3 weeks from now this administration must fulfill its own legal obligation to make a determination on whether it will name ISIS' crimes as acts of genocide or not.

The time has come. In fact, the time is long past for our Nation and our world to officially recognize these crimes by ISIS for what they truly are and to commit fully to defeating ISIS. We simply cannot ignore this any longer, and we must bring H. Con. Res. 75 to the House floor as soon as possible.

Again, I thank you for yielding this time and thank you for your leadership in this regard.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his thoughtful commentary and leadership as well on this essential issue. In fact, it is not an issue at all. This is an assault on all humanity. This is a threat to civilization itself.

If a group of people can succeed in exterminating another group because they have the power to do so, because they do not believe in another's religion, they violate that sacred space that is essential to all persons and, therefore, the conditions of liberty that are necessary for human flourishing.

This goes beyond the grotesque tragedy in the Middle East. It is a call to the entire responsible community of nations to act, to say that we will not allow eighth-century barbarism that happens to have 21st-century weaponry to rule in a land, destroy, kill, maim, and exterminate entire groups of people because of their religious tradition. It is wrong. It is unjust. If not addressed, all of civilization is at threat. That is the core of the problem here.

I thank you so much for your willingness to spend a little bit of time and your leadership on these critical points. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, again, it is H. Con. Res. 75, House Concurrent Resolution 75. It has been introduced here in the House, and there is a similar resolution in the Senate. It will be forthcoming in the coming weeks. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs will be considering this resolution soon.

I am hopeful that, again, with my colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), and others, who have shown just extraordinary leadership and deep concern and compassion for those who are in need, we can continue to build the numbers and make the case to all of our colleagues and

our government that it is time to call this genocide and, by declaring such, again setting the conditions that will be necessary to reintegrate people, those who have survived, back into their ancient lands for which they have a rightful claim.

I heard a story recently from a commander who had been in Mosul during the height of the Iraq war. Part of their obligation and responsibility was to protect the various religious minorities who were there. He talked about seeing the very beautiful Christian church that was there.

All the Christians are gone from Mosul. The remaining ones had the Arabic letter N, Nun, spray-painted on their door in blood red. That is a symbol for the word Nazarene, which some use as a derogatory term to Christians. They were told: Convert, leave, or die. Many had to flee with whatever they had on their back.

Of course, we know the horrific stories of those who gave their life in fidelity to their faith. This is a systematic attempt to wipe certain peoples off the map. It is not fair. It is unjust. It must be countered with a worldwide response.

The designation of genocide is that critical first step, again, toward the possibility of restoring some tranquility of order whenever there is the right type of security and economic and cultural settlement that must come to the Middle East if it has any chance, again, to flourish.

We can lead in this regard. We must lead. Other countries around the world have already taken up this banner. As I said earlier, the European Parliament has declared it so.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the ability to converse today with my colleagues on this threat, this threat to civilization itself, and our need to act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BUCK (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of illness.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2234. An act to award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services; in addition to the Committee on House Administration for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills